

it seems merely a beautiful excrescence. The psychology of the characters in "Le Docteur Pascal" is also good. In point of fact, no doubt, this was a long meditated work. Almost from the time when Zola began his series — at least as soon as the Empire had fallen — he pictured the *finale* ahead of him, he thought of it during all the years when he was writing the intervening volumes, he gradually planned and perfected it in his mind long before he actually wrote it. It is not a book for the vulgar, who come and go, heedless of the problems, possibilities, and purposes of life ; but though the love of Pascal and Olotilde may offend moral prejudices, though from the standpoint of scientific accuracy the narrative may be disfigured by the error of Macquart's death, we hold this to be the noblest, the most convincing, the most consoling book that Zola ever wrote. Such an opinion, however, may not find much acceptance in England and America where the bias in favour of revealed religion is so strong.

Without insisting further on the merits or demerits of particular volumes, if we glance at the series as a whole we shall find it to be an unexampled achievement. It is more self-contained than "La Com^die Humaine," in writing which Balzac really had no definite plan. As M. Chaumi6, French Minister of Public Instruction, has said: " In Zola's work one finds all society . . . with the

milieu® in which
it displays its activity, the men composing it,
the passions
which stir and sway them, their vices,
sorrows, and mis-
eries, the sufferings too of the disinherited,—
the whole
forming so striking and so true a picture that
after con-
templating it those with the poorest like those
with the
keenest sight must realise the necessity of
remedying those